



  
North Carolina Public Health

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## Visual Impairment and Eye Care Among North Carolina Adults: Results from the New Vision Module Questions in the 2006 BRFSS Survey

by

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### ABSTRACT

**Objectives:** Eye health and use of eye care have not previously been measured among North Carolina adults. In 2006, questions from the newly developed vision module were included in North Carolina's BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System) survey. In this study, we present data related to impaired vision, eye-care insurance, and recent eye exams.

**Methods:** BRFSS survey results on visual impairment and vision care were available for 11,312 adult respondents age 40 and older. Impaired vision was defined as having at least some difficulty with near or far vision, even with corrective glasses or contact lenses if usually worn. A recent eye exam was defined as having an eye examination by a doctor or eye care provider in the past 12 months.

**Results:** Among adults age 40 and older, the statewide prevalence of impaired vision was 31.6 percent. The prevalence of impaired vision was highest among Americans Indians (39.3%) followed by African Americans (37.4%), whites (30.5%), other minorities (26.4%), and Hispanics (24.5%). Among those with a high risk for eye disease, 41.4 percent of diabetics had visual impairment. Overall, an estimated 41.9 percent of North Carolina adults do not have eye care insurance, and 36.3 percent have not had a recent eye exam. Among the two most common reasons for not having a recent eye exam, 52.1 percent of adults cited "no problem or reason to go," and 24.5 percent indicated cost or lack of eye-care insurance.

**Conclusions:** These new BRFSS vision module questions will serve as an important tool for monitoring eye health and use of eye care among North Carolina adults.



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